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AN HISTORIC CHURCH

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MAKEMIE MEMORIAL  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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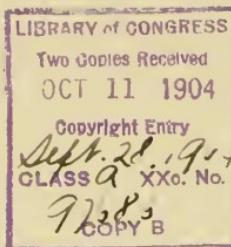
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SNOW HILL, MARYLAND

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MRS. MARY M. NORTH  
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AKEMIE Memorial Presbyterian Church, in Snow Hill, Maryland, holds a unique position among the churches of the United States, for it will in a few years celebrate the quarter millennial of its organization. The town in which the church is located is in that section known as the "Eastern Shore," and has an ideal climate, the air being tempered with salt enough to make it exhilarating. Snow Hill is situated upon the Pocomoke river, which flows through cypress swamps, that dye the waters a rich mahogany color. The river is very crooked, and is noted for its great depth, as well as for being very narrow. To the west, lies the Chesapeake Bay. Only seven miles to the east, is that long narrow body of salt water, Synepuxent Bay, (the home of the oyster), which is separated from the Atlantic ocean by the narrowest possible strip of sandy beach.

Before 1686 Snow Hill was a growing town, but in that year the law-makers recognized its importance, and that it should be classed as a town, and so it was laid out as such by an act of the General Assembly. The act prescribed that the

houses were to cover four hundred feet of ground, and the chimneys were to be built of brick. At this time the town was still in Somerset County, that county not being divided until 1742, when Thomas Bladen was Governor of Maryland. At that time an act was passed for laying out anew the town of Snow Hill.

And so, forty-six years before the Assembly passed a similar act for any other town in that great territory, Snow Hill was a town of some importance, and already a port of entry and export. Even Baltimore came forty-three years after Snow Hill.

There is no doubt that the people who settled here were Protestants, for the Sheriff of Somerset reports: "Here are neither Popish Priests, lay brothers, nor any of their chapels. As to Quakers and other dissenters, to the first, none as I know of particularly; and the other hath a house in Snow Hill, one on the road going up along the seaside, one at Manokin, about thirty feet long—plain country buildings all of them."

All Hallows Protestant Episcopal Church was established here prior to 1709, for it is spoken of at that date in a communication now in the possession of the Bishop of London. In



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the same manuscript a dissenting minister is mentioned. He probably was the Presbyterian organizer, or the minister in charge of the church at that place.

In 1681, Presbyterians in Somerset were writing to the mother country for a minister. Francis Makemie, a licentiate of the Presbytery of Laggan, in Ireland, was sent them. In Bible days when St. Paul reached a new country he went into the cities and towns, and it is probable that Makemie did the same, and as there were Presbyterians in Snow Hill, it is reasonable to suppose that he organized them into a church and then continued his labors in nearby localities. In the absence of documentary proof that any other church was organized first, Presbyterians of Snow Hill claim this, and if this church were not the first, the fact remains that the "Eastern Shore" of Maryland was the birth-place of Presbyterianism in America.

Craighead, in "Scotch and Irish Seed in American Soil," says about Makemie that, "arriving in this country in 1682 or 1683, he organized a church in Snow Hill, Md., in 1684, which was, so far as now known, the first regularly organized Presbyterian Church in America."

About that time, Makemie organized five churches—Snow

Hill, Rehoboth, Manokin, Pitt's Creek, and Wicomico in Somerset county, which then included the present counties of Somerset, Worcester and Wicomico. To celebrate the two hundredth anniversary of the founding of their church, the Presbyterians of Snow Hill began the erection of the present handsome structure, which is a memorial to the man who organized the first churches in America, Rev. Francis Makemie.

The present building (Makemie Memorial) is of red brick, with red sandstone trimmings. There are five beautiful memorial windows in the church. Three of them very large, and two of medium size. The one in front is The Sowers, and is a splendid work of art. It is a memorial to John Richardson, who was for many years an Elder in the church; and the money was furnished by his daughter, Lady Martha Kortright, of England.

The large window on the north with a design of a lily-entwined cross is a memorial to Mrs. Henrietta E. W. Smith, and was the gift of the Sabbath School.

On the same side is a smaller window embellished with two angels, a memorial to Elizabeth S. Townsend, from her sons.

The large window on the south is embellished with the



THE MANSE



figures representing, Faith, Hope and Charity. It is a memorial to Mrs. Elleanora Richardson and was given by her husband, the late George S. Richardson. Near this window is one of smaller size with the figure of the paralytic on it. The descendants of Dr. John Selby Martin gave it in memory of him and his wife, Rebecca Grace Martin. Dr. Martin was for a third of a century a Ruling Elder of the church. The pulpit was given by Mrs. Jane M. Kelso, in memory of her brothers, Revs. Elkanah D. and William D. Mackey, who were successive pastors of the church, A. D. 1857-68.

The font, a superb piece of workmanship, is of sandstone, and represents an open water lily, springing from a cluster of leaves. It stands about three feet high. It is a memorial to Edward Smith Handy, of Philadelphia.

In the grave yard adjoining the church among many others of sainted memory, lie the remains of two members of General Washington's staff, Lieutenant Colonel Levin Handy and Major James Handy; also Judge Ara Spence, Irving Spence, Hon. Ephraim King Wilson, Mr. George S. Richardson, Rev. Elkanah Dare Mackey, Mr. J. P. Duffield, Hon. John R. Franklin, Mrs. Sally W. Hutchinson, daughter of Col. John Gunby, of the Revolutionary Army; Matthew Hopkins, born

1776, and for many years Register of Wills of Worcester Co; Mrs. Margaret Ann P. Robins, daughter of Rev. John P. Robins; Mrs. Elizabeth Whittington, daughter of Col. Samuel Handy; Mrs. Zipporah Williamson, wife of the Rev. Stuart Williamson.

The early records state that the first edifice was a "plain country building," so it is presumed that it was built of logs. This gave place in 1751 to a frame building, which in 1795 was superseded by a brick structure, which cost £142-5s-4d exclusive of pews, and the pastor's salary at that time was £44-13s-2d.

Some interesting items are gleaned from old records. The committee of the Presbyterian Church consisting of Jamie Martin, John Stevenson, James Nairn, Moses Nelson, Levi Hudson, Thomas Martin, Robert Smith, George Rice, William Stevenson, Joseph Stevenson, Ezekiel Wise and John Rock, was incorporated December 19th, 1800.

In 1864 at the annual election of the committee the following were chosen : John R. Franklin, E. K. Wilson, Lemuel P. Collins, E. K. Richardson, George S. Richardson, R. T. Waters Hugh M. Stevenson, Thomas F. Stevenson, Irving Spence, Samuel H. Jarman, John R. P. Moore, and L. R. Bishop. Forty years later the committee comprises : J. Samuel Price, Oscar M. Purnell, Clarence L. Vincent, John P. Moore, Marion T. Hargis, William I. Ronnds, Dr. John S. Aydelotte, Adial P. Barnes, Dr. Paul Jones, Sidney F. Nelson, Sidney T. Selby, and L. Hastings.

In August 1823, it was decided that collections should be taken up in the church on Sabbaths to defray the contingent expenses. In 1824, Mr. Andrew White, of Philadelphia, presented the church with "a set of cups for the communion service." Prior to January 1826, the services of the pastor were shared with Pitts' Creek and Rehoboth churches, for about that time the Committee received a letter "containing a resolution on the dissolution of Rehoboth and the two other congregations."

Until 1834 there had been a high pulpit in the church for the minister, and one below this, in which the "clerk" stood and raised the hymns, but in that year it was decided that "the pulpit in this church is not such an one, either in its appearance or construction, as to impart comfort and convenience to the pastor," and a new one should be built. In 1846 a resolution was adopted to be sent to the General Assembly then about to convene, depreciating all discussion of the slavery question by that body. In 1850 we find that the ladies have a sewing society, for to them permission is given to repair the churchyard enclosures, and in 1855, some money is turned over to them to be expended for window shutters. In 1857 a parsonage was purchased.

It is to be deplored that the earliest records of this church were destroyed by fire many years ago, for much valuable historical data was lost to the church at large. A complete list of those who have served the church as pastors is not to be obtained, but after much research the following incomplete list has been compiled. It is not known positively how long Rev. Francis Makemie served, but it is presumed until just before his death, which occurred in 1708.

- 1683 or 1684—1708. Rev. Francis Makemie, Pastor.  
1708—Rev. John Hampton, Pastor.  
1757—Rev. David Purviance, Supply.  
1776—1779. Rev. Samuel McMaster, Supply.  
1779—1810. Rev. Samuel McMaster, Pastor.  
1811—1812. Rev. Stuart Williamson, Supply.  
1812—1814. Rev. Stuart Williamson, Pastor.  
1814—1818. Pulpit vacant; services conducted by Mr. J. P. Duffield.  
1818—Rev. Stephen Saunders, Pastor.  
1820—1829. Rev. Thomas B. Ballch, Pastor.  
1831—Rev. Alexander Campbell, Supply.  
1831—1839. Rev. Cornelius H. Mustard, Supply.  
1840—1848. Rev. James J. Graff, Pastor.  
Nov. 1848— to March, 1849. Rev. Mr. Munnis, Supply.  
1849— May to November. Rev. John Atkinson, Supply.  
1850—1857. Rev. Benjamin Grigsby McPhail, Pastor.  
Oct. 1857—1859. Rev. Elkanah D. Mackey, Pastor.

1859—1868. Rev. William D. Mackey, Pastor.  
1869—1870. Rev. Charles Beach.  
1872—1876. Rev. Benjamin F. Myers, Pastor.  
1879—1883. Rev. David Conway, Pastor.  
1885—1891. Rev. James Campbell, Supply.  
1890—1893. Rev. David Bruce Fitzgerald, Pastor.  
1894—1898. Rev. William Swan, Pastor.  
1899—Rev. Joseph B. North, LL. D., Pastor.

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